

2/16/79

Dick(only),

The very intensity of work sometimes dims recollection of specifics, so I am not now certain what I had in mind in the writing to which you allude in your 2/9, which didn't reach me until today, together with the letter of that a.m., of which you sent Howard and Gary copies.

I can give you this specific answer: I do not and did not think that there was an extra shot fired at Bethesda. As we try to account for what has not been accounted for, it is necessary to consider all possibilities, of which this is one. While people there were capable of arranging Forrestal's suicide, for without their collaboration it could not have been, that need have required but one or two with guilty knowledge. Firing a shot, even with a silencer, inside a building, where there were two (I think dedicated) Secret Service men guarding the corpse and two FBI men watching them, aside from the assorted handlers and functionaries, necessitated much too large a conspiracy to have been risked. In general, I think we must think in terms of minimum numbers.

My own belief is that there was a conspiracy to kill and what is virtually indistinguishable from a conspiracy to obfuscate what happened, and that it is not essential that they be connected, though they may well have been.

However, this is not to say your conjecture is impossible, or that it had to have been done in Bethesda, or that it had to have been accomplished by a bullet only, so what is the thing you have in mind? Certainly we have no adequate explanation of any of those wounds or how inflicted, so why not consider when?

Hope this isn't too brief. I got the mail early at the P.O. and want to answer it all so I can get to work.

Best,